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ABSTRACT

This document presents information about young people's perceptions of contemporary society as elicited by the 1971 National Assessment in social studies. Topics covered include perceptions (1) of contemporary urban problems, (2) environmental quality, and (3) minority groups and social justice. Responses to the open-ended questions are displayed in tables and graphs which distinguish the age groups surveyed, 9, 13, 17, and adult; acceptable responses; and categories of answer content. For example, 13- and 17-year-olds listed the three most important problems facing large cities in the United States. A table showing the percentages of students able to respond and a table of those responses with percentages of students mentioning them are presented. Then the students chose one problem about which they would like to ask questions; percentages choosing various problems are given. The tabular evidence is investigated, and sample responses are given. The material in this document can suggest areas for curricular emphasis and new questioning exercises that may "turn students on." Use of these materials to stimulate discussion and for comparing student responses is encouraged. (JH)

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A Project of the Education Commission of the States

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REPORT 03-SS-02

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CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES

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FOREWORD

The National Assessment of Educational Progress is an information-gathering project which surveys the educational attainments of 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and adults (ages 26-35) in 10 subject areas: Art, Career and Occupational Development, Citizenship, Literature, Mathematics, Music, Reading, Science, Social Studies and Writing. Two areas are assessed every year, and all areas are periodically reassessed in order to measure educational progress. Each assessment is the product of several years' work by a great many educators, scholars and lay persons from all over the country. Initially, these people design objectives for each area, proposing specific goals which they feel Americans should be achieving in the course of their education. These goals are reviewed by more people and then passed along to developers of tests, whose task it is to create measurement tools appropriate to the objectives.

When the exercises prepared by the test developers have passed extensive reviews by subject matter specialists and measurement experts, they are administered to a probability sample of 80-90,000 individuals. The people who comprise the NAEP sample are chosen in such a way that the results of their assessment can be generalized to an entire national population. That is, on the basis of the performance of about 2,500 9-year-olds on a given exercise, we can generalize about the probable performance of all 9-year-olds in the nation.

After the assessment data have been collected, scored and analyzed, National Assessment publishes reports such as this one to present the results as accurately as possible. Not all exercise results have been released for publication. Because National Assessment will administer some of the same Social Studies exercises again in five years to determine whether the performance level of Americans has improved or declined, it is essential that they be kept secret in order to preserve the integrity of the study. If the unreleased exercises can be discussed without revealing their content, they are examined. However, the discussion is much less detailed than it is for the released exercises.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress also publishes a *General Information Yearbook* which describes all major aspects of the assessment's operation. The reader who desires more detailed information about how National Assessment defines its groups, prepares and scores its exercises, designs its sample and analyzes and reports its results should consult *Report 03/04-GIY, General Information Yearbook.*

INTRODUCTION

The exercises in this volume present various kinds of information about the perceptions people have of contemporary society. They have much to tell us about how information is received, understood and transmitted in our society. In the chapters that follow, an attempt will be made to explore some of the issues about which young Americans have indicated a concern. The exercises in Chapter 1 open a Pandora's Box of contemporary social issues which are followed up in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 will focus on a number of exercises dealing with issues of environmental quality. In Chapter 3, we will look at some aspects of the knowledge and attitudes young Americans have about social justice and minority groups.

Hopefully by the end of this volume, you will have a better indication of how young people think and what types of issues they consider relevant. Perhaps some of the results will surprise you and suggest areas of the school curriculum that need more emphasis. The exercises and response patterns may suggest new ways of "turning students on" to important issues. We encourage teachers to use these materials in their classrooms to provoke discussion among students; it would be interesting to compare the responses gathered in 1971 to those that could be gathered today.

CHAPTER 1

PANDORA'S BOX

Urban problems young Americans consider important

When people discuss many of the major problems confronting us as a nation, their attention often focuses on large urban centers. Although social problems are not, in a strict sense, solely the problems of big cities, they do appear more pressing and visible in the city. In 1971-72, the Social Studies assessment gathered information on the general understanding young Americans ages 13, 17 and 26 to 35 exhibited about major problems facing large cities in the United States today. What kinds of problems did young Americans consider important? What resources would they seek out to obtain more information about problems of interest to them?

In one exercise dealing with city problems, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked to list three important problems generally facing large cities in the United States. The percentages of respondents able to give one, two or three acceptable responses appear in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Percentages of Respondents Listing Acceptable Problems, Exercise RS007, Three Problems of Large Cities

Number of Acceptable Responses	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
At least one	95%	99%	99%
At least two	89	97	97
Exactly three	66	84	87

Two out of three 13-year-olds fulfilled the requirements of the exercise and could list three acceptable responses. Among 17-year-olds and young adults, the percentages were considerably greater.

Sample responses

The problems cited by respondents include a broad range of issues. Examples of acceptable answers include: "noise," "air pollution," "crowded housing," "poverty," "robberies," "not enough jobs," "not enough organizations for kids (boy scouts, girl scouts, etc.)," "racism," "juvenile delinquency," "loneliness," "too many crimes," "garbage collection," "inability to get from place to place...," "fostering growth and development for the city's future." One youth observed, "The people that are supposed to be ruling over U.S. problems, mayors and things, they usually don't know what people want, they just do what they think."

Among the unacceptable responses were those mentioning war as a problem. While respondents were not often specific, it would be fair to assume they meant the war in Vietnam. Although these responses could not be considered a direct response to the question, they do show some insight into the interrelationship of national and international issues. Many of the staunchest critics of American involvement in Vietnam have suggested that the war has indirectly created problems for our cities.

Tables 2 through 5: some indication of priorities

Table 2 lists all the categories of problems considered acceptable and the percentages of respondents mentioning each at least once. Comparisons of the various percentages reveal that each age group has somewhat different priorities.

Having listed three problems, respondents were next asked to identify one problem about which they would most like to ask questions. Among 13-year-olds, pollution ranked far above the others, with 41% citing it. Drugs ranked second, with 13% of the 13-year-olds wanting to know more about them, followed by a cluster of problems about which 5 to 7% of the 13-year-olds showed interest. Table 3 lists the percentage of 13-year-olds wanting to ask questions within the most frequently selected problem categories.

Most notable among the shifts in responses when compared to those given to the first question is in the overpopulation category. Although 42% of the 13-year-olds mentioned overpopulation as a problem, only 6% wanted to ask questions about it. Also noteworthy is the relatively low priority given to the category "intergroup relations." The issue of racial problems seemed relatively unimportant at this age level. Ecology (pollution-overpopulation), drugs and crime stand out as being the most important urban problems for 13-year-olds in 1971.

TABLE 2. Percentages of Respondents Listing Problems Within Each Category at Least Once, Exercise RS007, Three Problems of Large Cities

Problem Category	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Pollution	73%	69%	51%
Overpopulation	42	48	43
Crime	25	41	38
Economic problems	19	18	37
Drugs	18	18	16
Poverty	15	25	20
Intergroup relations	11	18	14
Transportation	8	9	17
Education	8	4	12
Social disorders	7	4	5
Health	4	4	4
Morals	4	5	2
Government	1	5	4
Natural disasters	1	0	0
Other	3	5	7

Are adults less concerned about pollution than youths?

Do the problems reflect what schools teach or what the press emphasizes?

TABLE 3. Percentages of 13-Year-Olds Wanting to Ask Questions in Selected Problem Categories, Exercise RS007, Three Problems of Large Cities

Problem Category	Percent
Pollution	41%
Drugs	13
Crime	7
Economic problems	6
Poverty	6
Overpopulation	6
Intergroup relations	5

Why so few questions about overpopulation?

The data for 17-year-olds (Table 4) reveals that ecological problems (pollution-overpopulation) seem most important to this age group, although crime is also given high priority. These major problems are followed by a second group of issues about which 6 to 10% of the 17-year-olds most wanted to ask questions. These include poverty, drugs, intergroup relations and economic problems. Poverty and intergroup relations appear to be more interesting as issues for 17-year-olds than for 13-year-olds or young adults. As with 13-year-olds, far fewer respondents wanted to ask questions about overpopulation (9%) than those who recognized it as a problem (48%).

TABLE 4. Percentages of 17-Year-Olds Wanting to Ask Questions in Selected Problem Categories, Exercise RS007, Three Problems of Large Cities

Problem Category	Percent
Pollution	27%
Crime	16
Poverty	10
Drugs	10
Overpopulation	9
Intergroup relations	8
Economic problems	6

Ecology (pollution-population), crime and economic problems stand out as the issues adults are most interested in finding out about. As with 13-year-olds, intergroup relations rank noticeably low; only 5% of the adults wanted to ask questions about it. Economic problems are a high priority for adults, and there appears to be strong curiosity about drugs as well, with 11% wanting to ask questions about drugs. Selected problems about which adults most often wanted to ask questions are ranked in Table 5.

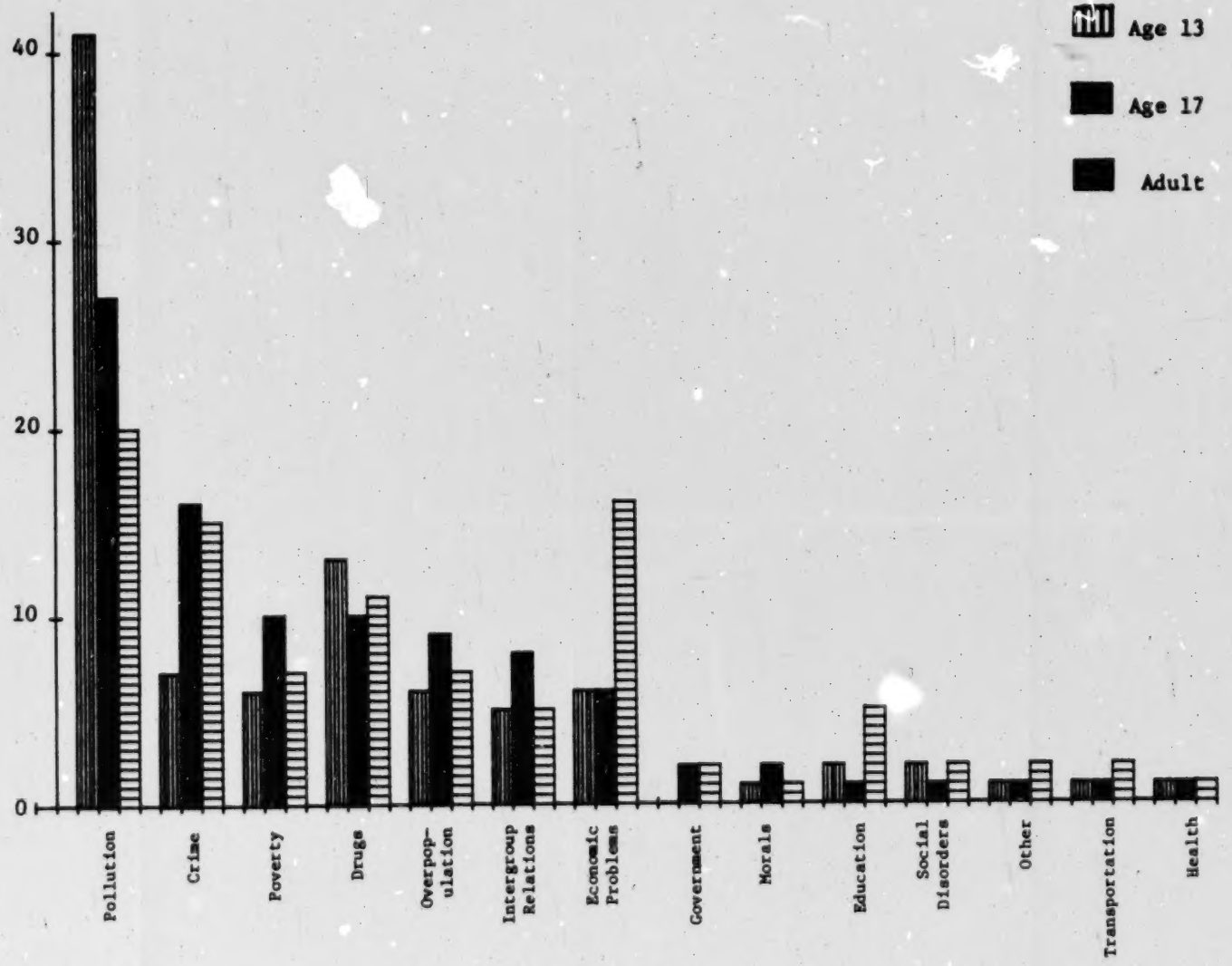
TABLE 5. Percentages of Adults Wanting to Ask Questions in Selected Problem Categories, Exercise RS007, Three Problems of Large Cities

Problem Category	Percent
Pollution	20%
Economic problems	16
Crime	15
Drugs	11
Overpopulation	7
Poverty	7
Education	5
Intergroup relations	5

Adults concerned with economic problems

Exhibit 1 compares the relative percentages of respondents choosing to ask questions about selected problem categories at ages 13, 17 and young adult. It serves as a useful indicator of the relative interests and priorities of these age groups concerning city problems. Among the important problems infrequently

EXHIBIT 1. Percentages of Respondents Choosing Selected Problem Categories, Ages 13, 17 and Adult, Exercise RS007, Three Problems of Large Cities



cited at any age level are education, transportation, government and health care. Perhaps these problems would be given more attention if the questions were asked today.

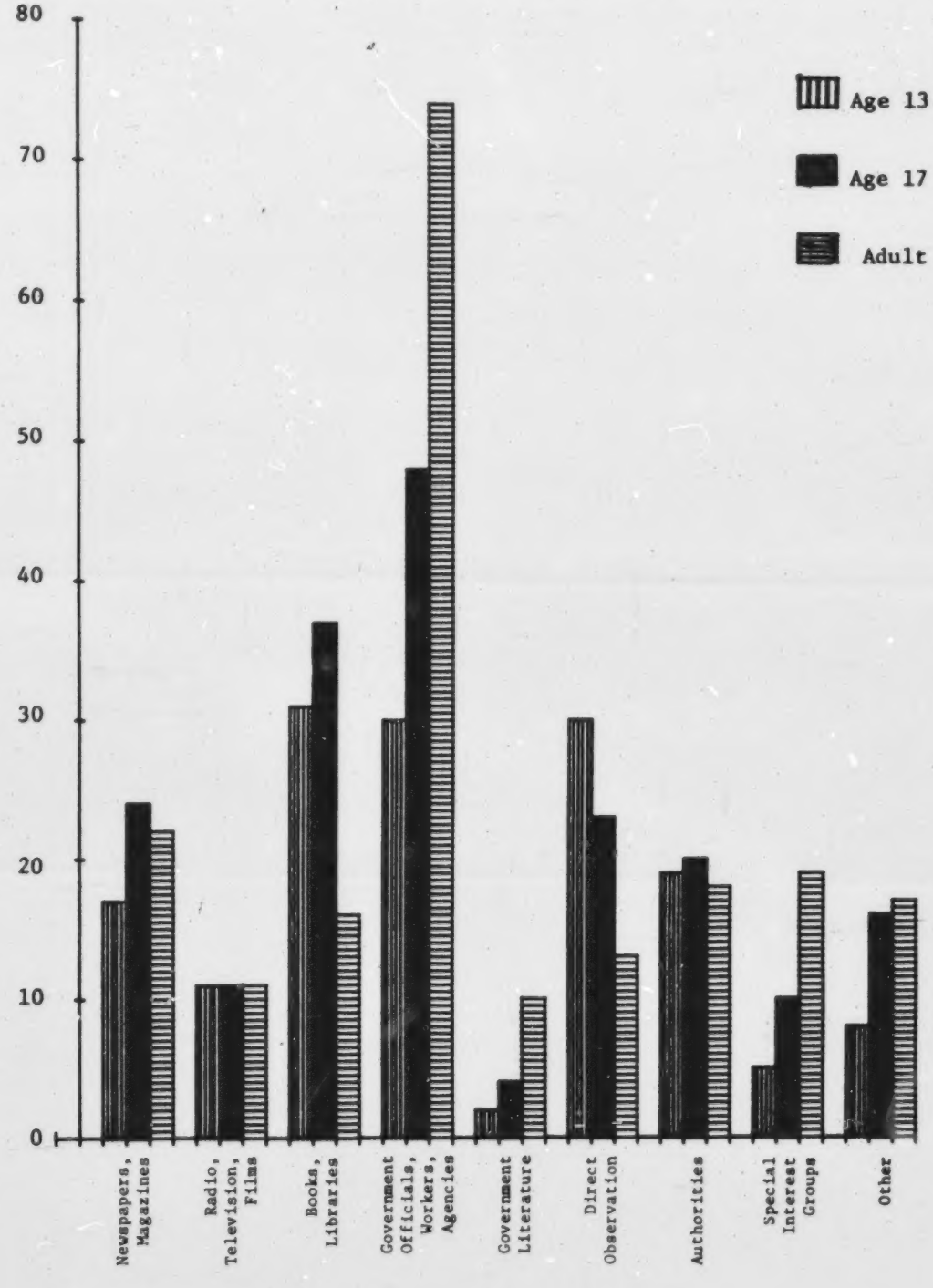
Having listed the problem they most wanted to ask questions about, respondents were then asked to formulate two questions that would enable them to find out more about it. Sixty-nine percent of the 13-year-olds, 84% of the 17-year-olds and 82% of the young adults were able to formulate two acceptable questions. Thirteen-year-olds generally asked questions of a very general nature such as: What causes the most pollution? or What are they doing about it? While many of the questions asked by 17-year-olds and adults were also very general, the quality of responses was far more diverse, with some responses indicating a greater depth of knowledge and concern about cities and city problems. Some examples include: Is the government doing as much as they can about drugs? or Is there any widespread standards as to what constitutes pollution and the forms used to measure it? Concerning the government, one respondent asked, "Why don't they expand their contribution when cities are decaying?" Another youth asked this question about traffic problems: How can we cut it down without hurting the industries in the cities?

Do people know where to look for information about modern problems?

Finally, respondents were asked to list at least two sources of information related to the problem they were most interested in. About three out of five of the 13-year-olds could meet this requirement. At 17-year-old and young adult levels, approximately four out of five respondents could do so. Table 6 shows the categories of sources identified and the percentages of respondents at each age level naming a source within each category at least once.

Exhibit 2 visually compares the data (see Table 6) for all three ages, giving the reader an indication of the relative importance of each category at each age level. Certain patterns do emerge. The percentage of respondents naming some form of direct observation at least once is directly proportional to their age levels. Although 30% of the 13-year-olds thought it would be helpful, the percentage drops to 23 at age 17 and to 13 for adults. This change would be substantiated by research in learning theory which stresses the importance of experiential education for young children. The percentages of respondents who would rely on government officials, workers or agencies, and special interest groups are also directly proportional to the age

EXHIBIT 2. Percentages of Respondents Choosing Each Source Category, Ages 13, 17 and Adult, Exercise RS007, Three Problems of Large Cities



levels but in direct contrast to those above. Approximately three fourths of the adults mentioned the government officials category at least once, and about one half of the 17-year-olds did so. However, only 30% of the 13-year-olds mentioned this category.

TABLE 6. Percentages of Respondents Naming Sources Within Each Category at Least Once, Exercise RS007, Three Problems of Large Cities

Categories of Sources	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Newspapers and magazines	17%	24%	22%
Radio, television, films	11	11	11
Books, libraries	31	37	16
Government officials, workers, agencies	30	48	74
Government literature	2	4	10
Direct observation	30	23	13
Authorities	19	20	18
Special interest groups	5	10	19
Other sources	8	16	17

People seem to rely more on printed materials than other sources

The wide range of percentages between the age levels could be the result of any number of factors. In managing daily affairs such as licensing, garbage collection or welfare, adults have more contact with government officials than youngsters. They are also involved in the political process as voters. Perhaps youngsters are more unsure of the functions of various governmental agencies than adults. These reasons might explain the discrepancies in the special interest group category as well. Nineteen percent of the adults mentioned this category at least once; this dropped to 10% at age 17 and 5% at age 13. Both 13-year-olds (31%) and 17-year-olds (37%) rely heavily on books and libraries as potential sources of information; however, at the adult level, this category drops to 16%. The electronic media (radio, television and film) ranked surprisingly low at all age levels.

Another exercise uncovered the understandings and attitudes that young people had about a variety of occupations of public interest and importance. In part A of the exercise, 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked to choose *one* person from a list including city planner, labor leader, lawyer, mayor, sheriff and television newsman with whom they would most want to talk. If they selected one of

the people listed in part A, they were asked what *one* question they would ask their choice about his work in part B. The percentages of respondents who both wanted to talk with one of the people listed and asked an acceptable question was highest at age 9. The percentages drop at each successive age levels; 73% of the 9-year-olds, 67% of the 13-year-olds, 66% of the 17-year-olds and 62% of the young adults chose one of these people and asked an acceptable question.

Hidden within the responses are a variety of clues about the issues that young Americans considered important. Table 7 presents the percentages of respondents at each age level who wanted to talk with one of the people listed in the exercise.

TABLE 7. Percentages of Respondents Wanting to Talk With an Individual Involved in Public Affairs, Exercise RS005, Part A, Questioning People About Their Work

Individual	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
City planner	7%	10%	12%	19%
Labor leader	1	3	6	12
Lawyer	12	13	20	12
Mayor	19	17	12	12
Sheriff	25	13	10	5
Television newsman	26	20	16	13
None of the above	10	23	24	27

Surprisingly low? Or do percents reflect Social Studies curriculum emphasis?

Do the response patterns tell us anything about the interests of the various age groups? Nine-year-olds showed greatest interest in the professions that held out some hope of excitement or glamor. The sheriff and television newsman were each chosen by about one fourth of the respondents at this age. Although 9-year-olds also showed great interest in the mayor's job (19%), respondents at the other age levels showed increasingly less concern with this occupation. Interest in talking with the city planner became greater as the age level of the respondents increased. Although only 7% of the 9-year-olds wanted to talk with the city planner, 19% of the young adults (the highest percentage for any of the six choices at this age level) showed an interest. The same general pattern occurred for the choice labor leader as well. This is probably not surprising since youngsters would have limited contact or knowledge of these professions. Although

Kids most interested in "glamor" jobs

both are involved in very significant decision-making functions in our system of government, few curricula dealing with the American political system show a concern for the role they or people like them play. Seventeen-year-olds showed most interest in the legal profession.[1]

The questions that respondents wanted to ask were categorized into various types. Some questions were general in nature; others were concerned with monetary aspects of the job; some people wanted to know qualifications; others had more specific questions to ask. A complete listing of the question categories and the percentages of respondents asking questions within each category is shown in Table 8.

Is it surprising that few questions about monetary aspects or qualifications are raised? What about job satisfaction?

TABLE 8. Percentages of Respondents Asking Questions in Each Category, Exercise RS005, Questioning People About Their Work

Question Category	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
General description	26%	50%	10%	5%
Monetary aspects	1	2	2	1
Qualifications	3	4	5	2
Satisfaction with occupation	9	12	7	4
Specific applications of occupation	29	--	32	31
"Opinions" of experts in the field	6	--	10	19
Any question if NONE chosen in part A	10	23	24	27
Unrelated to occupation	6	1	2	2
Vague or nonsensical	5	4	5	6
Don't know	2	1	1	1
No response	4	3	2	2

[1]This data is corroborated by the results of a recent Gallup poll which indicated a tremendous growth in the popularity of law as a career. In 1962, 8% of the young adults deciding on careers chose law as the best profession. In the most recent survey, the figure rose to 20%.

A sampling of actual questions at each age level provides a clearer indication of the concerns, interests and conceptions respondents had about these various occupations. Among 9 and 13-year-olds, many questions seeking a general description of the work were asked: What do you do? Is it hard? Is it exciting? Nine-year-olds especially tended to glorify the excitement of being a sheriff. Common questions were: Did you ever get shot? Is it very dangerous? How do you get so good on guns? Who's wanted by the police? Based on the questions that 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds directed to the labor leader and the city planner, it was clear that they had little awareness of what these occupations entailed.

Although a relatively small percentage of respondents asked questions about the qualifications necessary for any of the occupations, the most interest in questions of this kind occurred at age 17. One 17-year-old replied, "I think that lawyers have important jobs and I would like to find out the procedures they must go through." Another wanted to know of the newsman, "How much schooling did it take to get his job."

The questions that 9 and 13-year-olds asked that involved job satisfaction were general in nature. Do you like your work? Is it fun? or How does it feel to be a mayor? were common queries at these ages. However, at the 17-year-old and adult levels, the questions were more pointed. One 17-year-old asked of the city planner, "Why don't you like your work? (You must not because we have poor housing areas)." Another asked of newsmen, "I would like to see if they get a personal satisfaction out of reporting crimes and bad news. They never seem to have anything good to say." One adult asked of newsmen, "Does he like to interview important people and find out peculiar things about them?"

Tough environmental questions asked of planners

Seventeen-year-olds expressed concern for a wide range of social problems including the environment, crime, values, politics and economics. On the whole, however, the questions asked were not very precise and seemed to lack real depth. Environmental questions were most often directed to the city planner. One respondent wanted to know, "Why he [city planner] wants to ruin the earth with concrete and steal?" Another, perhaps less biased, asked, "When you're laying out plans do you feel any guilt about planning to cover the earth with permanent concrete?" One asked, "Why all towns don't have some type of recreation for young

people." Another student with a somewhat different orientation wanted to know, "How is the city going to be changed in the future?"

Questions concerning crime were most often directed at the sheriff. In general, however, they showed more concern for the problem than an understanding of it. One 17-year-old queried, "What is the main reason for so many crimes and what does he [sheriff] think would be the best thing to do to help?" Others asked questions like these: If there is many murders? or How many people are brought to jail in a year on the average? A seemingly caustic question of one 17-year-old was, "How many Hippies did you get today?"

A number of questions related to the value orientation of certain occupations. One 17-year-old asked of the labor leader, "Why do you keep striking for higher wages? It just makes all the other prices go up." Lawyers were asked: Do you have your own morals when you work or do you do as your client wants? Of the mayor: Does he make decisions for the settlement of a situation or does he make decisions to influence his re-election?

Some people did not want to speak with any of the suggested individuals. Unfortunately, the question was not phrased in a way that allowed respondents to suggest the person with whom they wanted to speak. However, some responses were recorded. Among them was the question of one 17-year-old who stated, "I would like to talk to the President of the United States. I would ask, 'Are you helping our country or just keeping people satisfied for now?'"

CHAPTER 2

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

The human environment is shaped by both physical and psychological forces which are often very difficult to separate. Three exercises administered in the Social Studies assessment suggestively point to the interrelationships and give us some clues as to how Americans view basic issues concerned with the quality of life.

In one exercise (RAB10), 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked to look at the picture below.

Photograph by Richard Hutchings

They were then asked the following question.

> *If this picture were taken in a neighborhood other than your own, would you want something done about the way things look?*

The percentages of respondents selecting each choice is given in Table 9.

As the table indicates, more than 9 out of 10 respondents at all age levels wanted something done

TABLE 9. Percentages of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RAB10, Part A, Removing Conditions of Poverty

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult*
Yes	99%	94%	94%
No	1	3	3
I don't know	0	2	2
No response	0	1	0

*In some cases tables do not equal 100%; this is due to rounding error.

about the way things looked in the picture. In the next part of this exercise, respondents were asked to give a reason for their answer. Although the percent of respondents who both answered "yes" and gave an acceptable reason is somewhat lower than the percentages of those that simply answered "yes," they are still high. Eighty-nine percent of the 13-year-olds and 86% of the 17-year-olds and young adults both answered "yes" and gave an acceptable reason.

The reasons people gave have been placed into various categories which reflect the substance of the responses. Table 10 provides a complete listing of these categories and the percentage of respondents within each one.

TABLE 10. Percentages of Respondents in Each Reason Category, Exercise RAB10, Part B, Removing Conditions of Poverty

Reason Category	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Concern for welfare of the people	44%	54%	49%
Concern for community appearance	39	29	33
Need for new facilities	3	1	1
Civic duty	0	1	0
Other acceptable	4	2	3
Any reason when NO given in part A	0	3	3
Vague or nonsensical	9	8	9

Half are concerned about people, one third concerned about appearance

As the table indicates, 44% of the 13-year-olds gave a reason which indicated concern for the physical or psychological well-being of the people living in the neighborhood. Some representative examples of these

responses at age 13 include: "Changed--not very good for community cause people would get sick in those houses. Not right for people to live that way," "It would make people feel better. It wouldn't make the people feel good who live there," "I don't think people should live like that."

Fifty-four percent of the 17-year-olds gave responses which also are in this category. Some representative samples of their reasons include: "People shouldn't have to live in such run-down conditions," "People living there are poor and unhappy," "People should have a decent place to live. Not just upper and middle-class people." Or as one 17-year-old summed it up, "People living in poverty are social outcasts--and we all are affected by it."

Almost half of the adults (49%) gave reasons in this category as well. Representative responses include: "If there are people living there, they need help. If its empty, it should be cleaned up," or "It would be better for the people living here if they could have it a little bit better."

The next most popular response type indicated concern for the appearance of the community. Thirty-nine percent of the 13-year-olds, 29% of the 17-year-olds and 33% of the adults gave reasons that were so classified. Many of these responses reflect the concern for our national image. One 13-year-old stated, "Because it doesn't give a very good picture of U.S." Others reflect the desire for pride in the community's appearance. Some examples include: "If it would look nice it sets an example for your town and other towns and more people would come and visit" (age 13), "I'd want it cleaned up--it could bring down the feeling toward the whole town" (age 17), or "It would downgrade a community. I don't think a city need to have areas like this around it" (adult). The last part of this exercise asked respondents to list two specific ways of removing conditions of poverty such as those shown in the picture.

33-45% can suggest two ways to fight poverty

Thirty-three percent of the 13-year-olds, 42% of the 17-year-olds and 45% of the adults were able to cite two acceptable ways. Table 11 provides more complete results. The responses were placed within categories reflecting the general suggestion of the respondent. Table 12 provides a breakdown of the percentages of responses mentioned at least once in each of the categories that were considered acceptable.

TABLE 11. Percentages of Respondents Giving Acceptable Ways of Removing Poverty, Exercise RAB10, Part C

	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Exactly two acceptable ways	33%	42%	45%
At least one acceptable way	79	85	86
Exactly one	46	42	41
None	19	12	14

TABLE 12. Percentages of Respondents Mentioning Acceptable Responses at Least Once, Exercise RAB10, Part C, Ways to Remove Poverty

	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Reconstruction of housing	44%	40%	32%
Increase employment opportunity	11	24	25
Government aid	12	18	20
Other ways (not categorized)	26	20	18
Improvement of education	4	12	25
Tear down and beautify	4	3	4
Reordering national priorities	1	4	1
Improvement of public services	1	1	1

Do the data indicate that 17s and adults have a more sophisticated awareness of the problems?

The greatest percentage of responses at any age level were categorized in "reconstruction of housing." Some examples include: "Move people there out. Knock down these houses and build new ones. Move people back in" (age 13), "Housing projects for poor people" (age 17), "Tear it out and rebuild if government would help."

Many responses suggested increased employment opportunity as a way to remove poverty. One 13-year-old replied, "Give a person a chance to work--so he can earn a living let him move to a better place." A 17-year-old replied, "Get steady jobs for people--private industry should try to provide jobs." One adult suggested, "Public funds could be used to help individuals who are unemployed to work in this area and beautify it. Recipients of welfare might help in project giving feeling they are working for what they get."

Government aid of all types was suggested by many respondents as well. One adult responded, "The state should have a welfare program for these people with controls. They should make sure that people are not exploiting the welfare and get people on work programs

and attitude reconditioning (psychological training)." One 17-year-old simply replied, "Urban Renewal Plan."

A large percentage (18 to 26%) of responses at all three age levels were acceptable but defied specific categorization because they were all so different. These were lumped together as "other ways."

Many of the responses were categorized as unacceptable because the solutions they suggested were too simplistic. Responses tended to emphasize simple clean up--"Remove all the trash," "Cut weeds," "Clear out the ground, remove stumps"--or major physical changes that did not suggest anything positive--"Tear down the houses," "Burn them." An encouraging statistic is that only a small percentage (3 to 5%) of respondents at any age level showed a lack of concern for people in poverty areas. Table 13 provides a complete breakdown of those responses categorized as unacceptable.

TABLE 13. Percentages of Respondents Mentioning Unacceptable Responses at Least Once, Exercise RAB10, Part C, Ways to Remove Poverty

Unacceptable Response Categories	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Cosmetic beautification	26%	18%	15%
Destruction of housing	11	6	8
Ways not assuring removal	4	10	9
Lack of concern	3	4	5
Nothing can be done	0	0	0
Other unacceptable	14	10	14
I don't know	4	2	4
No response	14	13	9

Only a small percentage were unconcerned

In another exercise using a picture, the intent was to find out if young people and adults were aware that changing an area's environment could affect people living in the area in a number of ways.

Nine-year-olds, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked the following question.

> *This is a picture of the construction of a highway. What effects do you think the construction of the highway will have on the lives of the people nearby?*

Photograph by Tip High

The percentages of respondents and the number of acceptable responses they gave are listed in Table 14. At least two acceptable responses were required for the entire exercise to be scored acceptably.

At least three fourths of the respondents ages 13 to young adult were able to give at least two effects that highway construction could have on the residents of the area; many could give three acceptable effects. The percentage of respondents able to adequately respond to the exercise increases greatly after age 9. The difference between 9 and 13-year-olds able to give two acceptable effects (28 percentage points) is much larger than the difference between 13-year-olds and young adults (10 percentage points).

TABLE 14. Percentages of Respondents Giving Acceptable Responses in Each Category, Exercise RKG18, Effects of Environmental Modification

Response Category	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
At least one acceptable	78%	93%	97%	97%
*At least two acceptable	47	75	82	85
Exactly three acceptable	17	40	48	55

*Number of required acceptable responses for an acceptable score on the entire exercise.

These percentages appear encouraging

Acceptable responses were categorized as advantageous or disadvantageous effects. They can be found in Table 15.

TABLE 15. Percentages of Respondents Mentioning Advantageous and Disadvantageous Effects, Exercise RKG18, Effects of Environmental Modification

Response Category	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Advantageous effects				
At least one	7%	14%	13%	22%
Exactly two	1	3	2	5
Disadvantageous effects				
At least one	74	89	95	94
At least two	44	69	77	75
Exactly three	16	33	39	40

Most respondents cited disadvantageous effects

As Table 15 indicates, disadvantageous effects were overwhelmingly cited at all four age levels. However, adults tended to give more positive effects than those at the other ages.

Advantageous and disadvantageous effects were further broken down into categories that reflect the concerns of the respondents. Table 16 indicates a complete listing of these categories.

The greatest percentage of respondents at all four age levels were concerned with the pollution and noise that would occur both during and after the construction. Some representative responses include: "People might be honking horns all night" (age 9), "Noise will affect

their lives" (age 13), "More tendency to have clogged up lungs from pollution" (age 17). One adult covered it all: "Those left near the highway would have to put [up] with noise, dirt, pollution and heavy traffic."

TABLE 16. Percentages of Respondents Mentioning Advantageous and Disadvantageous Effects at Least Once, Exercise RKG18, Effects of Environmental Modification

Acceptable Effect Categories	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Disadvantageous effects				
Pollution or noise hazard	46%	65%	70%	73%
Safety hazard	26	42	44	43
Displacement of people	16	23	25	19
Decrease in size or value of property	7	13	18	24
Added taxation	0	2	2	2
Loss of existing facilities	8	10	9	7
Other disadvantageous effects	11	7	15	16
Advantageous effects				
Facilitate transportation	4	9	6	11
Impetus to economic growth	1	4	6	9
Other advantageous effects	3	3	3	8

Compare to problems cited in Table 2

There was also great concern at all ages for the safety hazards involved, especially where children might be involved. "Children might be killed crossing the highway," said one 9-year-old. "Parents would be afraid to let their children play outside," explained a 13-year-old. One adult responded, "The mothers will be a nervous wreck keeping children off the highway."

Concern for people high

Concern for the displacement of people that could result was greatest at ages 13 and 17. One nostalgic 13-year-old remarked, "When the children are grown up they won't be able to see where they lived at first." A 17-year-old said, "There would be a lot of pressure put on these people because they probably have been asked to move."

Adults voice economic concerns

As might be expected, adults tended to respond to the question in ways that reflected their economic

concerns. They expressed concern for the depreciation of property values but also cited the positive effects of improved transportation and the impetus to the growth of business and industry more often than the other age groups.

A political cartoon was used in another exercise to invoke responses. Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were shown the following HERBLOCK cartoon and asked:

What idea is the artist trying to put across in this cartoon?

Cartoon by Herbert Block*

Eighty-three percent of the 13-year-olds, 88% of the 17-year-olds and 91% of the adults were able to respond successfully to the question. Table 17 also gives the percentages for those responding unacceptably or not at all.

*Herbert Block, "Richest Country in the World," from *Herblock's Here and Now* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1955), p. 273. Reprinted by permission of Herbert Block.

TABLE 17. Percentages of Respondents Giving Acceptable, Unacceptable or No Response, Exercise RSI31, Political Cartoon

Response Category	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Acceptable	83%	88%	91%
Unacceptable	16	11	7
No response	1	1	2

The responses were further divided into a number of categories. These are shown in Table 18.

TABLE 18. Percentages of Respondents Responding in Each Category, Exercise RSI31, Political Cartoon

Response Category	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Identifies implied contrasts	29%	60%	50%
Identifies more than one major idea	28	9	9
Identifies one major idea	26	19	32
Failed to note any important idea	4	1	1
Completely missed idea	8	5	2
Vague or nonsensical	3	4	3
Don't know	1	2	1
No response	1	1	2

Half the adults grasped all implications of the cartoon →

Among those responses scored "acceptable," those which identified the contrasts that the cartoon suggested were generally excellent. For the most part, they were very perceptive and understood the implications of the cartoon. One 13-year-old responded, "Big cities are rich in material things but often poor in things that co[illegible]--like education." Another remarked, "All the money is going into the buildings and the city and that they are forgetting the schools and children's education. They are forgetting that if they neglect children's education that they can't keep the so-called richest nation in the world rich." A 17-year-old scolded, "While our nation can afford high rise apartments, airplanes, etc. its a pity we cannot take care of our schools. I'm ashamed of you-no picture of war which bits off 2/3 of our dollars." Another advised, "Our society is drowning in its own affluence. We are reaping the harvest of unplanned, illogical industrial growth. Herblock is point out the

Some perceptive comments about cartoon

irony of our wealth; it has gotten so out of hand that we are its victims. Also note the lousy priorities-schools come last." One adult replied, "People are willing to spend money on cars, fancy sky-scrapers and air travel but when it comes to education just get by on the smallest amount possible." Another succinctly stated, "The richest country in the world has a pretty poor school system."

A majority of the 13-year-olds who scored acceptably on this exercise identified one or more of the major ideas expressed in the cartoon but did not note any contrasts or relationships between ideas. Fifty-four percent of the responses at age 13 were classed in these two categories. Forty-one percent of the adult responses were also classified in this way. However, only 28% of the responses at age 17 were so classified. These responses were generally not as good as those which identified the contrasts, but were still considered acceptable.

Do Americans understand political cartoons very well?

Although more adults (91%) scored acceptably on this exercise than did either 17-year-olds (88%) or 13-year-olds (83%), these percentages are perhaps somewhat deceptive. In terms of the quality of the responses elicited, 17-year-olds would appear to have the edge. Sixty percent of the respondents at age 17 were able to identify the implied contrasts in the cartoon, compared to 50% at the adult level and only 29% at age 13. By making use of the breakdowns we were able to get a clearer picture of what the percentages at a given age mean.

CHAPTER 3

MINORITY GROUPS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The recent exposure of minority groups in America, for a long time the "forgotten" people, can be traced to the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the awakening that has followed it. However, the change has been facilitated by a number of developments occurring in the last 50 years. The transformation of this country from a rural, agricultural nation to an urban, industrial nation has had a profound impact on the total American experience. The rapid shift in minority populations from rural to urban areas focused minority problems in large urban centers, intensifying the problems and making them visible to us all. "Their" problems suddenly became "our" problems as well, and it was impossible to totally ignore them. The speed and sheer volume of available information has also made it more difficult for us to ignore what is happening around us. The funeral of Martin Luther King, Jr., the riots in Watts, a lettuce boycott or the recent occurrences at Wounded Knee are only a click of the television away from most Americans. Americans predisposed to an "out of sight, out of mind" attitude find it increasingly more difficult to maintain their insularity.

The exposure of minority groups has had an important impact at all levels of the educational establishment, particularly in the area of social studies education. By the late 1960s, social studies educators had become aware of what sorrowful treatment minority peoples had received in social studies curricula and were demanding an end to the era of benign neglect. In practice, this has most often been translated to mean more attention to the historical contributions and contemporary role of minority groups within the framework of traditional American history courses. Attention has usually centered on Black Americans, the largest single minority group.

National Assessment sought to find out to what extent young Americans were knowledgeable about the contributions of minority people to the history and

culture of our nation. The issue was explored by asking 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults to respond to the following exercise.

> *American Indians, Black Americans, Oriental Americans, and Spanish-speaking Americans have contributed a great deal to the history and culture of our nation. For each of the groups I read, tell me the names of as many famous or nationally known men and women as you can. The person named may be either living or dead. Briefly describe each person's contribution or field of work. Consider people in ANY field of work--the Arts, Business, Civil Rights, Education, Entertainment, Politics, Science, or Sports.*

Table 19 shows the percentages of respondents at each age level able to give verifiable names within each of these minority groups.[1]

TABLE 19. Percentages of Respondents Able to Give One to Five Acceptable Names for Every Group, Exercise RKH13A-D, Minority Roles in the History and Culture of America

	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Exactly one in each group	0%	0%	3%	11%
Exactly two in each group	-*	0	1	2
Exactly three in each group	-	-	0	1
Exactly four in each group	-	-	0	0
Exactly five in each group	-	-	-	-

*A dash (-) signifies that no respondents gave answers in a category. A zero (0) signifies that some respondents, but less than 1%, gave answers in a category.

Few young Americans are knowledgeable about the contributions of minorities to our history and culture

The results presented in Table 19 speak for themselves. Tables 20 through 23 give results for each of the four minority groups mentioned in the exercise.

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[1] If respondents stopped before naming five people in any of the four groups, they were probed with the following question: Can you name any other famous men or women in this group?

TABLE 20. Percentages of Respondents Able to Give One to Five Acceptable Names of Famous American Indians, Exercise RKH13, Part A, Minority Roles in the History and Culture of America

	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
At least one	23%	47%	62%	65%
*At least two	6	18	35	41
At least three	1	5	15	21
At least four	0	2	6	9
Exactly five	0	1	2	4

*The asterisk represents the minimum number of names considered acceptable for each minority group.

TABLE 21. Percentages of Respondents Able to Give One to Five Acceptable Names of Famous Black Americans, Exercise RKH13, Part B, Minority Roles in the History and Culture of America

	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
At least one	47%	81%	95%	96%
At least two	19	52	79	85
*At least three	8	34	64	73
At least four	4	20	49	59
Exactly five	2	11	35	43

*The asterisk represents the minimum number of names considered acceptable for each minority group.

People know more names of famous Black Americans than names of people in other minority groups

The analysis indicates that the percentages of acceptable responses are quite low for all the minority groups, perhaps with the exception of famous Black Americans (refer to Table 21). Eight percent of the 9-year-olds, 34% of the 13-year-olds, 64% of the 17-year-olds and 73% of the young adults met the minimum requirement of acceptability on this question and could name at least three famous Black Americans.

A clearer indication of the knowledge Americans have of Blacks and how they get this knowledge can be seen by reviewing the responses in some depth. Table 24 lists the 10 most frequently named Blacks at each age level, and the percentage of respondents naming that person.

TABLE 22. Percentages of Respondents Able to Give One to Five Acceptable Names of Famous Oriental Americans, Exercise RKH13, Part C, Minority Roles in the History and Culture of America

	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
At least one	1%	2%	6%	16%
*At least two	0	0	1	4
At least three	-†	0	0	1
At least four	-	-	0	0
Exactly five	-	-	-	0

*The asterisk represents the minimum number of names considered acceptable for each minority group.

†A dash (-) signifies that no respondents gave answers in a category. A zero (0) signifies that some respondents, but less than 1%, gave answers in a category.

TABLE 23. Percentages of Respondents Able to Give One to Five Acceptable Names of Famous Spanish-speaking Americans, Exercise RKH13, Part D, Minority Roles in the History and Culture of America

	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
At least one	3%	11%	22%	40%
*At least two	1	3	7	20
At least three	0	1	3	10
At least four	-†	0	2	4
Exactly five	-	0	1	1

*The asterisk represents the minimum number of names considered acceptable for each minority group.

†A dash (-) signifies that no respondents gave answers in a category. A zero (0) signifies that some respondents, but less than 1%, gave answers in a category.

The individuals named in Table 24 can be grouped into four general categories for purposes of analysis--contemporary political figures, historical persons, entertainers and sports figures. Table 25 lists the number of Blacks most frequently named at each age that fall into these categories.

As Table 25 indicates, the most frequently named famous Blacks are clearly entertainers and sports

TABLE 24. 10 Most Frequently Named Blacks at Each Age Level, Exercise RKH13, Part B, Minority Roles in the History and Culture of America

	Percent		Percent
9-Year-Olds		13-Year-Olds	
Martin Luther King	14%	Martin Luther King	55%
Flip Wilson	13	Flip Wilson	14
Willie Mays	4	George Washington Carver	13
George Washington Carver	3	Willie Mays	8
Bill Cosby	3	Louis Armstrong	7
Louis Armstrong	3	Bill Cosby	6
Joe Frazier	2	Sammy Davis, Jr.	5
Sammy Davis, Jr.	2	Muhammed Ali	5
James Brown (singer)	1	Kareem Jabbar	4
Kareem Jabbar	1		
17-Year-Olds		Adults	
Martin Luther King	78	Martin Luther King	83
Flip Wilson	18	Sammy Davis, Jr.	24
Sammy Davis, Jr.	18	George Washington Carver	23
George Washington Carver	16	Louis Armstrong	17
Louis Armstrong	10	Muhammed Ali	12
Bill Cosby	10	Willie Mays	10
Willie Mays	9	Flip Wilson	10
Booker T. Washington	8	Mahalia Jackson	9
Muhammed Ali	8	Jackie Robinson	9
Wilt Chamberlain	8	Booker T. Washington	9

TABLE 25. Number of Most Frequently Named Blacks in Each Category, Exercise RKH13, Part B, Minority Roles in the History and Culture of America

Analysis Category	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Contemporary political figures	1	1	1	1
Historical persons	1	1	2	2
Entertainers	5	4	4	4
Sports figures	3	4	3	3

personalities, although Martin Luther King is unquestionably the one Black most often mentioned. Among

Blacks that are historically significant only George Washington Carver and Booker T. Washington are named often enough to fall within the top 10 at any age.

Another way of looking at the level of awareness that young Americans have is by analyzing the number of times the names of famous Blacks mentioned rarely or not at all were given. Table 26 provides information on the number of times historically important Blacks or contemporary Black leaders were mentioned at each age. Although the number of respondents mentioning any given individual is very small, suggestive patterns do emerge.

TABLE 26. Blacks Mentioned Rarely or Not at All, Exercise RKH13, Part B, Minority Roles in the History and Culture of America

Famous Blacks	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Ralph Abernathy	0	18	72	76
Crispus Attucks	6	18	22	12
James Baldwin	0	0	5	17
Benjamin Banniker	0	0	6	2
Julian Bond	1	5	18	32
Edward Brooke	1	2	16	85
H. Rap Brown	0	6	39	30
Ralph Bunche	0	1	13	80
Stokely Carmichael	0	2	31	27
Shirley Chisholm	1	14	145	103
Eldridge Cleaver	0	2	31	25
Angela Davis	1	14	136	86
Frederick Douglas	20	37	76	12
W.E.B. DuBois	0	1	18	6
Charles Medgar Evers	0	2	7	19
Langston Hughes	2	2	12	3
Rev. Jesse Jackson	5	16	49	53
Malcolm X	2	22	112	77
Huey Newton	0	2	11	8
Adam Clayton Powell	0	4	51	76
Dred Scott	0	5	17	2
Bobby Seale	0	3	21	5
Carl Stokes	0	10	21	36
Nat Turner	0	3	18	3
Roy Wilkins	0	0	1	22
Whitney Young	1	5	8	22

Some observations based on Table 26 include:

1. Interest in political activists rises sharply at age 17 and begins to tail off by young adult (e.g., Rap Brown, Eldridge Cleaver, Angela Davis, Bobby Seale).

2. Black leaders who work "within the system" are rarely mentioned except by young adults (e.g., Wilkins, Young, Brooke, Bunche).

3. Historical figures (e.g., Nat Turner, W.E.B. DuBois), other than those traditionally mentioned in history books (i.e., Crispus Attucks, Frederick Douglas) are rarely named except by a few 17-year-olds.

4. Aside from Martin Luther King, few of the civil rights leaders of the early 1960s are mentioned. When they are mentioned it is almost exclusively by young adults (e.g., Abernathy, Evers, Wilkins).

In general, Black Americans seem to be more knowledgeable about Black history and culture than other Americans

Table 27 compares the national percentage for acceptable names of famous Black Americans (refer to Table 21) to the percentage of only Black Americans on the same items, suggesting some thoughtful lines of questioning. In general, Blacks mention more names than the nation as a whole on this item, especially at ages 9 through 17. As more names are required, the spread in percentage between Blacks and the nation as a whole tends to increase; that is, Blacks tend increasingly to mention more names. Seventeen-year-old Blacks seem most knowledgeable about their history and culture. Over one half the Blacks at age 17 are able to give five acceptable names. More Black young adults could mention exactly five acceptable names (46%) than young adults nationally (42%).

A closer examination of the results for selected famous Blacks uncovers some unmistakable differences in the response patterns that emerge for Blacks when compared to the nation as a whole. For discussion purposes, the names have been divided into four general categories--political/historical figures, singers/musicians, sports figures, and general entertainers.

Among the political/historical figures some distinct patterns occur. Harriet Tubman is mentioned by Blacks appreciably more often. The difference in percentage between Blacks and the nation increases in

TABLE 27. Percentages of Black Americans Able to Give One to Five Acceptable Names of Famous Black Americans Compared to Overall National Percentage, Exercise RKH13, Part B, Minority Roles in the History and Culture of America

	Age 9			Age 13		
	Nat'l %	Black %	Diff.	Nat'l %	Black %	Diff.
At least one acceptable name	47%	55%	8%	81%	87%	6%
At least two acceptable names	19	29	10	52	65	13
At least three acceptable names	8	16	8	34	45	11
At least four acceptable names	4	8	4	20	32	12
Exactly five acceptable names	2	4	2	11	19	8

	Age 17			Adults		
	Nat'l %	Black %	Diff.	Nat'l %	Black %	Diff.
At least one acceptable name	95%	98%	3%	96%	94%	-2%
At least two acceptable names	79	90	11	85	83	-2
At least three acceptable names	64	80	16	73	72	-1
At least four acceptable names	49	69	20	59	60	1
Exactly five acceptable names	35	52	17	43	47	4

direct relationship to the age of the respondents. Although the percentage of young people naming her is relatively consistent nationally, among Blacks, Tubman's name appears increasingly more often at ages 13 and 17. Booker T. Washington and Shirley Chisholm are mentioned consistently more often by Blacks. In both cases, the greatest difference occurs at age 17. The patterns of George Washington Carver and Martin Luther King are mixed. Carver is mentioned less often by Black 9-year-olds and young adults, but more frequently by Blacks ages 13 and 17. King, on the other hand, is mentioned more often by Black 9 and 17-year-olds, but less often by young adults that are Black. The differences at age 9 are quite distinct. Thirty percent of the Blacks mention Martin Luther King, compared to 14% of the nation. At ages 13, 17 and young adult, however, the distinctions are less obvious. Only in the case of Angela Davis are the national percentages consistently higher than those of Black Americans.

A comparison of the results for James Brown, the soul singer, dramatically points out the sharp distinctions that occur in selected cases. For both 9 and 13-year-old Blacks, Brown is a very meaningful personality. Although his name is only given by 8% of the Black 9-year-olds, it is second only to Martin Luther King in number of times mentioned. At age 13, 12% of the Blacks mention Brown. These figures are far higher than their respective natioral percentages. Louis Armstrong, on the other hand, is consistently

mentioned less frequently by Blacks than by the nation as a whole.

The data indicate some age level consistency in the patterns of results for famous sports figures. Nine-year-old Blacks mention both Joe Frazier and Willie Mays less frequently than 9-year-olds generally. However, the percentages nationally and for Blacks are quite low. At 13 years old, Blacks are consistently above national percentages in all three cases. Among Black adults, both Muhammed Ali and Willie Mays are named less frequently than nationally. Perhaps most interesting is the differing response among 17-year-old Blacks mentioning Muhammed Ali and Joe Frazier. Nine percent of the Blacks at age 17 mention Ali compared to 2% for Frazier.

What are the implications of these results for Social Studies teachers? For textbook writers? For politicians, Black and White?

Does this exercise give us any insights into what young Americans know about minority groups in general and Black Americans more specifically? Although the individual examples given in this section are interesting and informative, perhaps the real insight of this exercise is revealed in the types of "minority people" young Americans generally know. The results do suggest something about how Americans tend to view their history. In this area, the exercise is pregnant with ramifications for American education. The tendency in dealing with Blacks in American history, when at all, appears to have been to select out those Blacks whose lives best reflect the mythology of the "American" melting pot. The tendency is to view famous people in terms of those who have "made it" as individuals, ignoring the broader implications of the role individuals play in the total American experience. The names elicited in this exercise and the way the exercise itself was constructed tend to substantiate this as the dominant perception of Americans of all races. We can say, at best, that Americans have been exposed to a variety of famous Blacks and that Black Americans are more knowledgeable about individual historical and cultural contributions of Blacks than the nation in general. Although the information for the other minority groups presented here is even more sketchy, it clearly suggests that more attention needs to be given to the minority experience as it relates to the total American experience.

A number of National Assessment exercises address the issue of whether or not young Americans are sensitive to some of the societal stumbling blocks associated with the opportunity for educational and economic advancement in the United States.

In one exercise, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked:

> *Tell me three reasons why you think people who live in areas where there are poor housing and living conditions don't move to a better neighborhood?*

Less than one out of four respondents at any age level could do so. Eighteen percent of the 13-year-olds, 24% of the 17-year-olds and 20% of the adults gave three acceptable reasons. More complete data is provided in Table 28.

TABLE 28. Percentages of Respondents Giving One-Three Acceptable Reasons for Poverty, Exercise RAB09

Number of Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
At least one	96%	97%	96%
At least two	60	68	66
*Exactly three	18	24	20
None	3	3	4

*Number of acceptable responses for an acceptable score on the exercise.

Responses were categorized according to various reasons expressed. A complete list of the categories and the percentage of responses mentioned at least once in each appears in Table 29.

Among the acceptable reasons given, the greatest percentage of respondents at all ages mentioned lack of funds. Nine out of 10 respondents mentioned reasons in the category at least once. Many of these responses did not reflect sensitivity to the possible societal connections to the problems of poverty. They were generally straightforward. "No money," said one 13-year-old. "Can't afford to move to a better neighborhood," responded one 17-year-old. "Low income," responded one adult. However, other responses did provide indications of concerns that went deeper. "They don't have the chance to make money," "Some don't have the money to get out and find the right kind of job" were responses of two 17-year-olds. One adult responded, "Since their educational level is low it tends to stifle them and they are unable to get better jobs."

TABLE 29. Percentages of Respondents Mentioning Each Category at Least Once, Exercise RAB09, Reasons for Poverty

Reason Category	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Lack of funds	91%	92%	91%
Discrimination	26	35	28
Security in life style	18	19	20
Lack of education	4	12	14
Lack of housing	8	5	5
Lack of employment	6	4	1
Accessibility to job	3	4	4
Other acceptable reasons	2	2	4
Stereotyped attitude	33	44	60
Vague or nonsensical	24	18	12
Other unacceptable reasons	1	2	2
I don't know	4	3	7
No response	39	27	13

Reasons that indicated social discrimination were given at least once by 26% of the 13-year-olds, 35% of the 17-year-olds and 28% of the adults. Among responses so classified are these representative examples. One 13-year-old said, "Other neighbors might not accept them." Responses at age 17 include: "Because of their race or ethnic background. This may prevent them from moving into other neighborhoods," "If they'd be dark--perhaps the white community wouldn't accept them." Some adult responses include: "They may think their children would be shunned by 'better' people," or "Fear of prejudice."

Approximately one out of five respondents mentioned reasons that implied people found security in their life styles and would want to remain close to their friends, relatives, jobs and schools. One 13-year-old answered, "Most of their friends are living there." A 17-year-old responded, "Feel more familiar with their own," while another said, "They might like to stay with their own social level." Adult responses were similar. "Social--all the people they know are there--people they have ties with--probably relatives."

Stereotyped attitudes increase with age

Relatively high percentages of respondents at all age levels mentioned reasons that indicated they had stereotyped attitudes about poor people. Noteworthy is the fact that the stereotyped attitudes tended to increase with the age of the respondent. Thirty-three percent of the 13-year-olds mentioned reasons in this

category, compared to 44% at age 17 and 60% at the adult level. "They want everybody to feel sorry for them," said one 13-year-old. "Some people just don't care," was a reason given by some 17-year-olds. Others said, "Most of them are too lazy to work," "They'd just as soon the government help them out--unemployment checks." One adult speculated, "Chances are if they did move into a better neighborhood, it wouldn't be better for too long of a time." Others replied, "Scared they will have to pay for something," "They were raised that way and don't care to better theirselves." One adult reasoned, "If they are welfare recipients they like to stay around where husbands can come in and not be so noticeable--and if they are living with parents--so mother can take care of kids while they run around."

Do the social studies deal with poverty in sufficient depth? Is treatment too academic?

In general, the responses to this question showed lack of understanding for or sensitivity to the problems facing the poor in this country. For the most part, even those responses that were acceptable did not exhibit much sensitivity to the realities of life for the poor. For far too many Americans, the mythology of the "American Dream" is still alive and well. Stereotyped attitudes are not easily changed.

Another exercise addressed the issue of community control of neighborhoods. An indication of the willingness to act in accordance with basic values underlying American society was sought in the following item administered to 17-year-olds and young adults.

Do you think people who live in a neighborhood should be allowed to decide who can and cannot live in their neighborhood?

Please explain any answer you selected.

More 17-year-olds gave acceptable explanations on this item than did young adults. The percentage of respondents able to give acceptable reasons for or against community control are found in Table 30.

TABLE 30. Percentages of Respondents Giving Acceptable or Unacceptable Reasons, Exercise RAB04, Community Control of Neighborhood

Reasons	Age 17	Adult
Acceptable	81%	65%
Unacceptable	17	33
None given	2	2

A further breakdown of these results is shown in Table 31.

TABLE 31. Percentages of Respondents in Each Possible Response Category, Exercise RAB04, Community Control of Neighborhood

Response Category	Age 17	Adult
Yes and acceptable reason	0%	0%
Yes and unacceptable reason	6	15
No and acceptable reason	80	63
No and unacceptable reason	7	6
Undecided and acceptable reason	1	2
Undecided and unacceptable reason	4	11
Undecided, no reason given	1	1

Does the gap between adults and 17s reflect changing attitudes? Or will the 17s think more like the adults after a few years?

A majority of the acceptable responses cited by both age groups referred to the "right or privilege of the individual to live where he chooses." Other answers were widely distributed throughout a number of categories (Table 32).

TABLE 32. Percentages of Respondents Giving Various Reasons For or Against Community Control, Exercise RAB04

Reasons	Age 17	Adult
Individuals have the right to live where they choose	63%	51%
Discrimination is wrong; bad effects of discrimination	10	8
Neighbors should not be allowed to choose	1	1
Other acceptable responses	6	5
Reason mentioning fear of depreciation of property (takes precedence over other negative categories)	2	6
Special conditions--neighbors should have some say in special cases	1	1
Reason making reference to zoning ordinances or ability to pay (does not mention first category)	1	2
Vague, nonsensical, other unacceptable responses	12	21
I don't know	1	2
No response	2	2

Sixty-three percent of the 17-year-olds and 51% of the adults gave reasons acknowledging the "right or privilege of the individual to live where he chooses." One student wrote that "a person should have the right to choose any place he wished to live and the people of the neighborhood should respect his decision. After all this is a free country." Another 17-year-old replied, "No, because I think a person should or can live where they please," and then added, "It is very hard nowadays to find good homes or places to live so I think a good small neighborhood is fine." "This is supposed to be a free country!" was the brief explanation of another. A few qualified their answers with statements about the cost: "I feel we should have the right to live in any area we want, provided we are able to buy the home and pay for it fully. There is no reason a person who is financially able to pay for a place shouldn't have the right to by it." Even more adults than 17-year-olds cited the cost qualification. "A person should have the right to live anywhere he can afford to live" was typical of these answers. Other adult responses included: "If people are supposed to have equal rights within the USA this should apply in all areas." "Just because someone lives in a certain neighborhood doesn't give them the right to decide who else can live there." One simply stated, "Equal rights bill."

Discrimination and its harmful effects were mentioned by 10% of the 17-year-olds and 9% of the adults. "There is overpopulation now," wrote a 17-year-old. "Not enough places for people to live. It isn't fair to discriminate, because of race creed or color." Another youth answered at length: "Many people are too prejudiced against a certain nationality or familiy (or a type of work--police) before even knowing anyone of that kind. Often, the people are not what their nationalities are made up to be." The adults wrote: "I don't believe in segregation of any form." "If persons were allowed to decide, it would create neighbors that were segregated according to race, creed etc., & allow no interaction of people or ideas." One adult concluded that "such a situation carried to the extreme can & often does lead to a desire to retain homogeneity in the neighborhood, resulting in discrimination & exclusivity." Two interesting replies from among the other acceptable responses given by 17-year-olds were: "This is God's land; it was put here for all men" and this lengthy answer with an unusual conclusion, "People will all to often judge others by their skin color, religion,

ethnic backgrounds or other unimportant qualities. According to the U.S. constitution people have the right to live any where they want to. Who knows maybe if we won't let others into our neighborhood God won't let us into his!!"

Six percent of the adults and 2% of the 17-year-olds mentioned their fear of depreciation of property--the most frequently cited unacceptable response. A small percentage of respondents at both ages thought neighbors should have some say about race. A 17-year-old explained, "If it is an all white neighborhood or all black neighborhood they should be able to pick who can or cannot live there, their would only be conflict between mixed races anyhow." Some adults shared his concern: "We should be able to pick because we may not want Negroes in our community." "Because there would be too much trouble if blacks and whites live together." A few in each age group mentioned special cases. One 17-year-old was worried that "it may be a person who sells dope and sell the neighbors children some." Another thought that in a commune "the people of the commune should decide who they would like to live with." An adult replied that "people should be allowed to decide if public housing will be built in their neighborhood." Another said, "I wouldn't want someone loud or sloppy. I wouldn't want a lot of dogs or cats running around loose." A small number of respondents made references to zoning ordinances or the ability to pay. These answers were considered unacceptable as they did not include a statement of the individual's right to live where he chooses.

Most of the answers scored as vague, nonsensical or otherwise unacceptable expressed the respondent's desire to control his social environment. One 17-year-old desired "to keep unwanted people out of their neighborhood who might be a bad influence on the children in that neighborhood." An undecided youth added that "if there is a certain family who may steal a lot from the neighborhood I don't think he ought to be able to live there." Another undecided 17-year-old said, "I would have to know a few more facts for example, what kind of people they would be and how or if they would affect the neighborhood as a whole." The adults replied: "People *should* have the right to decide the makeup of a particular neighborhood but not to the degree that a person's race or religion should be a determining factor. We all would like our children to grow up in a 'safe' neighborhood but with some exposure to all people." Another adult who knew his

own tastes said, "There are an lots of undesirable people that I wouldn't like to live by me." He may have been more blunt in his reply than most but he also expressed the attitude of many. The unacceptable responses offered a number of reasons--all of which added up to the fact that many Americans, though certainly not a majority, were unwilling to grant equal rights to all of their fellow citizens.

Another exercise dealt with the issue of equal employment opportunity. Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked:

Should race be a factor in hiring someone for a job?

Please give a reason for any answer you selected.

Most young Americans support equal employment opportunity

Ninety percent of both 17-year-olds and young adults gave acceptable responses. Seventy-four percent of the 13-year-olds responded acceptably to this item. Table 33 provides more complete results.

TABLE 33. Percentages of Respondents Giving Acceptable or Unacceptable Reasons Why Race Should or Should Not Influence Employment, Exercise RAB16

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Acceptable	74%	90%	90%
Unacceptable	22	9	9
No response	4	1	1

As Table 34 shows, only a small percentage of the respondents cited reasons reflecting an awareness of the legal protections provided against racial discrimination. "According to the law everyone who is equally qualified must have an equal chance for employment," answered a 13-year-old. "As Americans we all have the rights of equal employment opportunities as afforded by our constitution," wrote a 17-year-old. Another responded, "Its against the persons constitutional rights if you refuse to hire him or her because of race. Its also against the law." The adults replied, "The constitution states their should be no discrimination among races" and "Theoretically, and constitutionally, a person should not be judged according to race, religion, or national origin." One adult explained at length, "It should be a part of one's civil rights that

one should not be deprived equal economic opportunity because of race. The economy is a community activity & if private economic power is allowed to discriminate by race it denies the individual an equal opportunity in the community." These, however, were representative of only a small minority of the responses.

TABLE 34. Percentages of Respondents Giving Various Reasons Why Race Should or Should Not Influence Employment, Exercise RAB16

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Ability most important factor	31%	50%	61%
Equality and dignity important	22	20	12
Race does not (should not) matter	9	5	4
Legal protection against discrimination	2	4	5
Other acceptable	10	12	8
Conditional (except reference to ability)	0	1	2
Anti-racial statements	0	1	0
Unsupported assumptions	0	1	2
Respondent interprets race as a contest or speed factor	5	1	0
Vague, nonsensical and other unacceptable responses	10	4	4
I don't know	6	1	1
No response	4	1	1

Ability cited most frequently

Sixty-one percent of the adults, 50% of the 17-year-olds and 31% of the 13-year-olds said that ability was the most important factor to be considered in hiring. "Race shouldn't be a factor in hiring someone for a job as long as he is qualified," claimed an adult. "A person should be hired for any job solely on the basis of qualification and for ability," agreed another. "Color should not make a difference in a person's ability to do a job," wrote a 17-year-old. "It's the ability that counts, nothing more." "Would you care to have a black genius or a retarded white?" asked a 13-year-old. This stress on ability is perhaps indicative of an acceptance of the underlying assumptions behind the American Dream--that because in America all are born equal, all have the opportunity to improve themselves and their lot. It is those who develop their abilities who are finally rewarded for their perserverance.

Others stressed the importance of quality and human dignity. "All men are created equal" and "Equal opportunities are a must," replied the 13-year-olds. "Everyone should be given an equal chance regardless of race, color or creed," wrote a 17-year-old. Other respondents his age added that "we are all the same inside" and "God created all mer equal. All men need a job." Another reason is that "even though they're a different color on the outside they're all made of the same stuff." Twenty-two percent of the 13-year-olds and 20% of the 17-year-olds replied in this category. Twelve percent of the young adults cited reasons of equality and dignity.

Approximately 10% of the respondents gave other acceptable responses. Thirteen-year-olds wrote: "One race can do as good as the other." "All races need a job." Seventeen-year-olds replied: "Because it would be hard for certain races to get jobs and unemployment would be an even greater problem than it is now." "Yes, there may be jobs where a person of a certain color is needed, such as in social work. It need only be a small factor but it is a factor. A white could not do a good job in a black section." "Race should definitely be a factor in hiring employees," argued another 17-year-old. "Blacks have been victimized in our society since 1620, and its about time they got a fair shake. If ratios are needed to end racism in our society, so be it." Adults suggested that "working together will help to reach better understanding" and "everyone have the right to earn a living." Only a small number of respondents voiced racist sentiments.

Surprisingly, a few of the respondents interpreted the word "race" to mean contest, as in a foot race. "Racing should not be a job," said a 13-year-old, "it should be just for sports." One thought speed important: "So you can get the work done faster." Another cautioned against undue haste: "Because you don't have to hire someone just because their fast in some jobs you have to be slow and careful." "They can have a race," said another 13-year-old, "but not until after they work a while." A 17-year-old explained, "If a person has better references or has better qualifications she should not have to race for the job that he would like to get." An adult wrote, "Unless its piece work and some people are slower than other. Neatness should count."

As amusing as some of these answers are, they do not erase the seriousness of the question or of most of

the answers given. One 13-year-old wrote, "I am Black." One can sense in these few words an understanding of the question and an awareness that racial discrimination continues.

SOME QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE DATA

Contemporary Social Issues raises numerous questions about the state of social studies education in our country today. Although the data do not provide definitive answers, they are provocative and require further investigation. Having read through this volume, you may want to consider these and other questions suggested by the data:

- Do young Americans have a dynamic grasp of social issues? Have they internalized the issues? Is their understanding on an academic level? Is it superficial or faddish?

- Are the realities of social problems translated intc principles upon which young people can and will act?

- Do the results suggest needed changes in the curriculum? Should schools be giving more emphasis to economics education, given the interest in economic problems at the adult level? (See Table 5.) Are schools preparing kids to become adults?

- Does social studies education put too little emphasis on film, television and radio? (See Table 6.)

- Does Table 7 suggest that perhaps the social studies curriculum puts too little emphasis upon important and powerful sectors of our society such as the labor movement and labor leaders? What about other influential lobbying groups?

- Do Tables 9 through 13 present encouraging information about how young Americans view poverty?

- Does the exercise on minority groups suggest that much more needs to be done to correct the image young Americans have about our history and culture?

- Is the social studies too crisis oriented? Too time bound? Is the interest young Americans seem to have in ecological issues simply a passing phase?

- Black Americans generally perform better on the item concerning the role of Black Americans in our history and culture. What implications does this have for other exercises on which Blacks tend to score more poorly than the nation as a whole? What are the implications for the testing and measurement community in general?

N O T E

National Assessment relies entirely upon subject area specialists for the creation of objectives, exercises and scoring criteria. The following consultants, deeply involved or interested in social studies education, participated in either the development of items, the creation of scoring guidelines or the review of exercises for the 1972-73 Social Studies assessment.

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